

George Soros calls for Increased Social Mobilization to Fight Rising Threat of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis

~New reports reveal that health experts and policymakers alone cannot effectively combat this killer disease~

****NEWS ADVISORY** NEWS ADVISORY** NEWS ADVISORY ****

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CONTACT: Amy Weil, OSI
(212) 548-0381; aweil@sorosny.org

PARIS –The Open Society Institute on November 1 will launch a series of new reports that reveal that community participation and public awareness—which have lent vital support to the fight against HIV/AIDS—have been excluded from efforts to control the spread of TB, including drug-resistant TB.

George Soros and OSI Public Health Watch experts from five countries will meet with journalists—by appointment only—at the World Conference on Lung Health in Paris. They will discuss the new TB studies conducted in Bangladesh, Brazil, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Thailand. According to the findings, the links between TB, poverty and HIV/AIDS result in millions of preventable deaths each year.

The five studies show that health experts and policymakers alone cannot effectively combat TB without public engagement to heighten awareness and mobilize research, prevention efforts, care, and funding. As TB is a major killer, government officials and civil society must join efforts to increase awareness of TB symptoms, available treatment, and the high risk of co-infection with HIV/AIDS. Without access to this kind of information, the stigma against people living with TB is more common and they are more likely to default on treatment, leading to an increased threat of drug-resistant TB and extreme drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB).

WHO:

- **George Soros**, Chairman, Open Society Institute
- **Olayide Akanni**, Senior Program Officer, Journalists Against AIDS of Nigeria
- **Afsan Chowdhury**, Director of Advocacy, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)
- **Jamillah Mwanjisi**, Network Coordinator, Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS), Kenya
- **Ezio T. Santos Filho**, lawyer and prominent HIV/AIDS and TB activist, Brazil
- **Amara Soonthorndhada**, Deputy Director, Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) at Mahidol University, Thailand

WHEN: Wednesday, November 1, 2006 between 14:30-17:30

WHERE: World Conference on Lung Health, Palais de Congrès, Paris

WHAT: Interviews with George Soros and OSI's Public Health Watch researchers

WHY: The lack of civil society engagement in TB control to date has severely hampered governmental efforts to control both TB and TB/HIV.

Note to reporters: Please contact Amy Weil to schedule all interviews. Embargoed copies of the report's overview and detailed bios of George Soros and OSI's Public Health Watch researchers are available upon request. For more information, please visit www.publichealthwatch.info.

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